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MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 2 June 1998 to you from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines, circulated as document A/52/943-S/1998/463, to which a statement purporting to be from the Chairman of the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum on nuclear tests was attached.

India has been a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum since 1996, participates actively in its work, and believes that it plays a useful role in discussing issues of security in the Asia-Pacific region in a non-contentious and constructive manner. Its primary objective is to create a better understanding of issues among its participants, and thereby promote dialogue and confidence.

It was in this spirit that India participated in a meeting of senior officials of the ASEAN Regional Forum which was held in Manila from 20 to 22 May. The Chairman's draft statement, considered at that meeting, had certain references which departed from the Regional Forum's tradition, which India could not accept, and which the Indian delegation therefore asked to be removed from the text. There was no consensus on the Chairman's draft, and since it is the established norm of the ASEAN Regional Forum that all decisions are taken only by consensus, the statement circulated through the letter of the Permanent Representative of the Philippines is not the collective position of the members of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the General Assembly, under items 64 and 81, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kamalesh SHARMA

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